

What is Claimed is:

Suba

1. A method of providing interactive options for non-frame television programs using a system, the system having a current display time frame, the non-frame television programs being outside the current display time frame, the method comprising:
 - presenting on a display screen at least one option that corresponds to a non-frame television program;
 - allowing the user to select a first of said at least one option; and
 - providing the user a service associated with said first option.
2. The method of claim 1 wherein said system is a television program guide system.
3. The method of claim 2 further comprising determining at least one valid option from a plurality of possible options, wherein said presenting comprises presenting said at least one valid option.
4. The method of claim 2 further comprising:
 - receiving data that corresponds to said non-frame television program; and
 - wherein said presenting comprises presenting at least some of said data to the user.
5. The method of claim 4 further comprising:
 - storing said data in a database after said receiving; and

wherein said presenting comprises presenting at least some of said data stored in said database to the user.

6. The method of claim 5 wherein said presenting comprises notifying said user using a method selected from a group consisting of on-screen and on-line methods.

7. The method of claim 6 wherein said notifying comprises notifying said user according to at least one procedure selected from a group consisting: (a) notifying said user after said data is received by a local database, (b) notifying said user after said data is received by a remote server, (c) notifying said user on a day that said program is broadcast, (d) notifying said user at a predetermined period of time before said program is broadcast, (e) notifying said user after receiving a request from said user, and (f) any combination thereof.

8. The method of claim 6 further comprising:
providing to said user the ability to select a predetermined period of time before said notifying, and

wherein said notifying comprises notifying said user at said predetermined period of time before said program is broadcast.

9. The method of claim 5 wherein said presenting comprises notifying said user with electronic mail.

providing to said user the ability to select a predetermined period of time before said notifying; and

11. The method of claim 2 wherein said presenting comprises displaying a program guide screen that includes a marker that indicates that information regarding a program is included in a program guide database.

12. The method of claim 2 wherein said presenting comprises displaying a program guide screen that includes a notification list comprising said first option, said first option being identifiable with a marker selected from a group consisting of an icon, a color, a display order, and any combination thereof when data regarding said non-frame television program is added to a program guide database, said non-frame television program thereby becoming an in-frame television program.

13. The method of claim 2 wherein said presenting comprises displaying a program notification on a program guide screen.

14. The method of claim 13 further comprising:

storing information regarding said non-frame program in a program guide database; and

wherein said displaying comprises displaying said notification immediately before said program is broadcast.

15. The method of claim 13 further comprising:

storing information regarding said non-frame program in a program guide database; and

wherein said displaying a program notification includes displaying an option to tune to said program.

16. The method of claim 13 wherein said displaying interrupts another television program.

17. The method of claim 13 further comprising:

providing to said user the ability to specify notification parameters before said notifying; and

wherein said notifying comprises notifying said user at a predetermined period of time before said program is broadcast.

18. The method of claim 13 wherein said displaying a program notification includes displaying an option to record a program.

19. The method of claim 2 wherein said presenting comprises presenting the user with an option to purchase a pay-per-view non-frame television program when the program is in-frame.

20. The method of claim 2 wherein said presenting comprises presenting the user with an option to automatically tune to a channel carrying said program when said program is broadcast.

21. The method of claim 2 wherein said presenting comprises presenting the user with an option to automatically record said program on a recording device when said program is broadcast.

22. The method of claim 2 wherein said at least one option is a notification list of options, said method further comprising automatically removing said first option from said list after said providing.

23. The method of claim 2 wherein said at least one option is a notification list of options, said method further comprising automatically removing said first option from said list after a predetermined period of time following an event, wherein said event is selected from a group consisting of (1) the time when data regarding said program is received by a local database, (2) the time when data regarding said program is received by a remote server, and (3) the time when said user is presented with said at least one option.

24. The method of claim 2 wherein said presenting is in response to a user request, said presenting comprising presenting a notification list including said at least one option.

25. The method of claim 24 wherein said notification list further includes at least one option that corresponds to an in-frame television program,

said presenting comprising presenting said at least one option in said list such that said in-frame and non-frame options are distinguishable to said user.

26. A method for providing notifications of non-frame television programs to a user using a system, the system having a current display time frame, the non-frame television programs being outside the current display time frame, the method comprising:

allowing the user to specify a non-frame television program outside of the current display time frame with a set-top box in the system; and

notifying the user with the system when the non-frame television program is now in-frame and is to be broadcast.

27. The method of claim 26 wherein said system is a television program guide system.

28. The method of claim 27 further comprising providing a notification option which the user selects to order notifications.

29. The method of claim 28 wherein said notification option includes a how soon option for determining how soon before the broadcast of the non-frame television program the notification is to be generated and sent to the user.

30. The method of claim 27 further comprising providing a view current notifications option which the user selects to receive a list of current notification orders.

31. The method of claim 27 further comprising providing a new notifications option that the user selects to order a notification by entering a program title.

32. An apparatus for providing notifications of non-frame television programs to a user using a television program guide system, the television program guide system having a current display time frame, the non-frame television programs being outside the current display time frame, the apparatus comprising:

means for allowing the user to specify a non-frame television program outside of the current display time frame; and

means for notifying the user when the non-frame television program is now in-frame and is to be broadcast.

33. The apparatus of claim 32 further comprising means for providing a notification option which the user selects to order notifications.

34. The apparatus of claim 33 wherein the means for providing a notification option includes means for providing a how soon option for determining how soon before the broadcast of the non-frame television program the notification is to be generated and sent to the user.

35. The apparatus of claim 33 wherein the means for providing a notification option includes means for providing a how often option for determining how often the notification is to be generated and sent to the user.

36. The apparatus of claim 32 further

37. The apparatus of claim 32 further

38. An apparatus for providing interactive

means for presenting on said display

means for allowing the user to select a

means for providing the user a service

39/ The apparatus of claim 38 further

40. The apparatus of claim 39 further

41. The apparatus of claim 40 further comprising:

wherein said means for presenting can present at least some of said data stored in said database to the user.

42. The apparatus of claim 41 wherein said means for presenting can notify said user using a method selected from a group consisting of on-screen and on-line.

43. The apparatus of claim 42 wherein said means for notifying can notify said user according to at least one procedure selected from a group consisting: (a) notifying said user after said data is received by a local database, (b) notifying said user after said data is received by a remote server, (c) notifying said user on a day that said program is broadcast, (d) notifying said user at a predetermined period of time before said program is broadcast, (e) notifying said user after receiving a request from said user, and (f) any combination thereof.

44. The apparatus of claim 42 further comprising:

wherein said means for notifying can notify said user at said predetermined period of time before said program is broadcast.

46. The apparatus of claim 45 wherein said means for notifying can notify said user according to at least one procedure selected from a group consisting: (a) notifying said user after said data is received by a local database, (b) notifying said user after said data is received by a remote server, (c) notifying said user on a day that said program is broadcast, (d) notifying said user at a predetermined period of time before said program is broadcast, (e) notifying said user after receiving a request from said user, and (f) any combination thereof.

means for providing to said user the ability to select a predetermined period of time before said user is notified; and

wherein said means for notifying can notify said user at a predetermined period of time before said program is broadcast.

48. The apparatus of claim 38 wherein said means for presenting can display on said display screen

a marker that indicates that information regarding a user-selected program is included in a program guide database.

49. The apparatus of claim 38 wherein said means for presenting can display a program notification on said program guide screen.

50. The apparatus of claim 49 further comprising:

a program guide database for storing information regarding said non-frame program; and wherein said means for displaying can display said notification immediately before said program is broadcast.

51. The apparatus of claim 50 further comprising:

a program guide database for storing information regarding said non-frame program to; and wherein said means for displaying can display an option to tune to said program.

52. The apparatus of claim 49 wherein said means for displaying can interrupt another television program.

53. The apparatus of claim 49 further comprising:

means for providing said user the ability to specify notification parameters before said user is notified; and

54. The apparatus of claim 49 wherein said means for displaying a program notification can display an option to record a program.

56. The apparatus of claim 38 wherein said means for presenting can present the user with an option to automatically tune to a channel carrying said program when said program is broadcast.

58. The apparatus of claim 38 wherein said at least one option is a notification list of options, said apparatus further comprising means for automatically removing said first option from said list after said first option is provided.

59. The apparatus of claim 38 wherein said at least one option is a notification list of options, said apparatus further comprising means for automatically removing said first option from said list after a predetermined period of time following an

60. The apparatus of claim 38 wherein said presenting can be in response to a user request, and wherein said means for presenting can present a notification list including said at least one option.

62. A system comprising:
a television distribution facility that provides (1) television programming, (2) television program listings that cover only television programming from the present through a predetermined time period, and (3) notifications of upcoming television programs scheduled to be broadcast after the predetermined time period; and

receive and display the television programming provided by the television distribution facility;

receive and display the television program listings that cover only the television programming from the television programming from the present through the predetermined time period; and

receive and display the notifications of the upcoming television programs scheduled to be broadcast after the predetermined time period, wherein the notifications are not part of the television programming.

63. A method for receiving notifications for upcoming programs, comprising:

providing a user with the opportunity to select a program that will air outside a program listings time frame which is currently available to the user; and

providing a notification to the user of the availability of the selected program during when the selected program is now in the current program listings time frame.

64. The method defined in claim 63 further comprising displaying a list of programs for which a notification is to be provided.

65. The method defined in claim 63 wherein providing a notification includes providing an e-mail notification.

66. The method defined in claim 63 wherein providing a notification includes providing a message notification.

67. The method defined in claim 63 wherein providing a notification includes providing a reminder notification.

68. The method defined in claim 63 further comprising providing the user with the opportunity to setup a configuration of the notification.

69. A program guide system, comprising:
user equipment that is configured to provide a user with the opportunity to select a program that will air outside the program listings time frame which is currently available to the user, and is further configured to provide a notification to the user of the availability of the selected program when the selected program is now in the current program listings time frame.

70. The system defined in claim 69 wherein the user equipment is user television equipment.

71. The system defined in claim 69 wherein the user equipment is user personal computer equipment.

71. The system defined in claim 69 wherein the user equipment is further configured to display a list of programs for which a notification is to be provided.

71. The system defined in claim 69 wherein the user equipment is configured to provide an e-mail notification.

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73. The system defined in claim 69 wherein the user equipment is configured to provide a reminder notification.

75. In a user television equipment, a method for receiving notifications for upcoming programs, comprising:

displaying a notification of the availability of the selected program during when the selected program is now in the current program listings time frame of the user television equipment.

77. The method defined in claim 75 wherein displaying includes displaying a message notification.

78. The method defined in claim 75 wherein displaying includes displaying a reminder notification.

79. The method defined in/claim 75 further

80. A program guide system, comprising user

81. The system defined in claim 80 wherein

82. The ~~/~~system defined in claim 80 wherein

83. ~~The~~ system defined in claim 80 wherein

84/ The system defined in claim 80 wherein